LIST OF PENDING CLAIMS

The following are the claims presented for examination with this Response being submitted May 26, 2006:

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Claim 1 (currently amended): A unison stringed instrument containing a device for increasing tuning longevity comprising:

a coupling positioned between two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate ~~in unison~~ at a consistent rate as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 2 (currently amended): A unison stringed instrument containing a device for increasing tuning longevity comprising:

a coupling positioned around two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate ~~in unison~~ at a consistent rate as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 3 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

a coupling positioned between two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the strings to oscillate substantially in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 4 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

a coupling positioned around two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the strings to oscillate substantially in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling.

Claim 5 (original): The device of claim 3 or 4, wherein said coupling comprises a high tensile metal.

Claim 6 (original): The device of claim 5, wherein said high tensile metal comprises steel, aluminum or titanium.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The device of claim 3, wherein said coupling is fastened between the strings of said ~~string~~ unison group using a tool that is capable of installing the coupling in a manner sufficient for enabling said strings to oscillate in unison at a desired pitch.

Claim 8 (currently amended): The device of claim 4, wherein said coupling is fastened around the strings of said ~~string~~ unison group using a crimping tool that is capable of supplying a level of compression sufficient for enabling said strings to oscillate in unison at a desired pitch.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A system for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

(a) a plurality of couplings sized and arranged within said unison stringed instrument, each coupling being positioned between two or more strings of a ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument; and

(b) an installation tool for expanding the strings to a degree adequate for installation of said couplings.

Claim 10 (currently amended): A system for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

(a) a plurality of couplings sized and arranged within said unison stringed instrument, each coupling being positioned around two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument; and

(b) a crimping tool having preset crimping compression values suitable for each size of said couplings.

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

coupling two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument with a coupling device so that the strings oscillate in unison at a desired pitch as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, comprising:

employing a crimping tool to couple two or more strings of at least one ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument with a coupling so that the strings oscillate in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 13 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, said device comprising:

(a) a shaped piece of material having high density and minimal dampening; and

(b) a plurality of recesses for receiving two or more strings in unison,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of adjacent strings of said instrument, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 14 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, said device comprising:

an open metal band curved and shaped so that said band compresses when placed over two adjacent strings of said instrument,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of said adjacent strings, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 15 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, said device comprising:

a metal clip curved and shaped so that when placed between two adjacent strings of said instrument, said clip exerts opposing forces on the strings,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of said adjacent strings, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 16 (currently amended): A device for increasing tuning longevity of a unison stringed instrument, said device comprising:

a first and second flat surface, said first flat surface being positioned above adjacent strings of said instrument, said second flat surface being positioned below said adjacent strings, said surfaces capable of being tightened toward each other,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of said adjacent strings, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 17 (currently amended): A method of altering the tone quality of a unison stringed instrument, comprising placing coupling devices between two or more strings of a ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said device comprising:

an open metal band curved and shaped so that said band compresses when placed over two adjacent strings of said instrument,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of said adjacent strings, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 18 (currently amended): A method of altering the tone quality of a unison stringed instrument, comprising limiting the free release of certain overtone frequencies by placing coupling devices between two or more strings of a ~~string~~ unison group of said instrument, said device comprising:

an open metal band curved and shaped so that said band compresses when placed over two adjacent strings of said instrument,

wherein the size and shape of the device enable coupling of said adjacent strings, allowing the strings to produce a unified resonant frequency as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling .

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 17 wherein the ratio of sustain to attack is increased.

Claim 20 (original): A method for maintaining the tuning of a string unison within a musical instrument comprising the steps:

(a) installing a coupling link for at least two of the stings in the unison along their speaking length;

(b) installing at least one crimping link in the non-speaking portion of the stings;

(c) tuning the string unison; and

(d) sliding one or more of the crimping links in either direction along the non-speaking length to adjust the pitch of the coupled strings.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A device for the installation of Pitchlock coupling devices comprising a flexible steel strap of sufficient length, wherein the strap includes a notch of

sufficient size to accommodate the pitchlock coupling device, and wherein the notch is between 1/16 and ½ an inch from the terminal end of the strap.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A device for installing Pitchlock coupling devices comprising a crimping plier, with two mated jaws, wherein one jaw is substantially convex in cross section, and the other jaw is concave in cross section.

Claim 23 (new): A piano containing a device for increasing tuning longevity comprising:

a coupling positioned between two or more strings of at least one unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling.

Claim 24 (new): A piano containing a device for increasing tuning longevity comprising:

a coupling positioned around two or more strings of at least one unison group of said instrument, said coupling enabling the coupled strings to oscillate in unison as a result of force transfer between the coupled strings effected by the mechanical connection of said coupling.

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